

#E1-667
RL

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001



February 21, 2004

Attention: Rini Ghosh
Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh;

In response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, I am submitting the following to be considered in the formal scoping process.

I believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and proposed SGR rail line, regardless of where the railroad is constructed, are connected actions, and should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The study should include direct impacts and alternatives to both projects, including no quarry and no rail line at all.

First I believe that the quarry will be an ugly eyesore to our community. I have yet to see any of Vulcan's properties that have been an improvement to the areas that they are currently located. They are unkept, open to view and dirty. We moved to this county 2 years ago to be surrounded by the beautiful farm and ranch lifestyle that Quihi is known for today.

Another point I want to address are the berms that will be created for the railroad tracks along creeks and streams. I now live in a flood zone that has been known to flood to approximately 1 foot in the previous floods. The last time there was rising water on our property it was stopped by the highway 90 railroad berms. Thankfully the berm gave way and the water was allowed to flow out. What will happen when several more creeks are blocked during the next big rainstorm? How high will my house have to be then? Will Vulcan care? Will you care?

I also have an issue with (Vulcan quote) "800 trucks a day" traveling on our country roads. These trucks will weigh approximately 78,000 lbs and will not be able to stop quickly for anyone, no matter how hard they try. What is the formula for feet-vs-lbs. to be able to stop a truck at the allowed 70 MPH on FM 2676? There are 2 spots that I travel that have a short view when I pull out onto the Highway. What about stopped school buses? or large, slow tractors? And at my estimate it seems that this amount of truck traffic would be 4 X the amount of typical road use today.

My last comment today, although I have MANY more, is that I have big issues with an independent business taking over private farm land for their railroad. One of my neighbors has a farm that has been in his family since this land was settled. The railroad Alternate 1 plans to run through the middle of his cattle ranch! How realistic is it going to be to use his land then. This is just one story, there are many families that are going to be impacted. Also the future issue of this railroad being used by other types of industry (possible chemical plants) is very unsettling to me.

I hope that you see that this project will effect an entire community. This is a great area and the people are kind and generous unlike any I have ever met. Thank you sincerely for your consideration in this matter.

Truly,
Aural E. Allen
141 CR 454, Hondo, TX

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